

# **Managing Expectations and How to Improve Employer -FDW Relationship**

**SATURDAY, 20 JULY 2019**

**LIFELONG LEARNING INSTITUTE**



**Foreign Domestic Worker Association  
for Social Support and Training**

# Background

## FDW Landscape in Singapore

- More than 250,000 FDWs
- 6 nationalities
- Serving more than 200,000 households

# Demographics



– Indonesia



– Philippines



– Myanmar



– Cambodia



– India



– Sri Lanka

# Common concerns of new FDW arrivals

**Can I adapt?**

**I don't know Singapore lifestyle.**

**How will my family manage back home?**



**I cannot speak English very well.**

**Will my employer scold me if I'm slow?**

**I cannot cope with the work.**

# Misalignments

- Communication:
  - FDW unable to speak English
- Economic Background
  - Most if not all FDWs who seek employment in Singapore, have financial issues back home
- Expectations
  - Skills level of FDWs does not match employer expectations (how do we do things around here)
- Customs, culture and religion

# Potential Disruptions

- Adjustments on both sides (habits take time to change)
- Presence of non-family member
- Frustrations and irritations arising from language barrier
- Financial crisis (cascading problem)
- Expectations on how things are done in Singapore

# Employer expectations when employing an



## FDW

- educational level
- work experience and skillset of FDW
- high learning curve for most FDWs in adapting to SG worklife
- dietary differences and hygiene standards
- most FDWs financially burdened and lack of financial literacy and management

# Good Practices for Employers



- Consider a proper induction programme

## Benefits:

- Higher retention rate than national average for FDWs after 1<sup>st</sup> year of employment (82% vs 43%)
- FDWs are able to meet expectations of employers
- Provides a **safety net** for new FDWs so that they can adapt and integrate to worklife in Singapore



# Good Practices for Employers

More than...



of Employers mentioned that they found their new Helper (who had gone through OIP) **more polite!**

More than...



of Employers mentioned that they found their new Helper (who had gone through OIP) has a **higher standard of work!**

Also, there was a...



increase in **FDW retention rate** when we tested OIP on over 200 FDWs at a local Employment Agency!

**Employers Have Witnessed Improvements!!!**

During the course, FDWs get to experience the Singaporean work environment before arriving at their respective Employers' households. No longer confined to simply textbook materials, FDWs pick up information and tips on how to increase work productivity, in a more practical manner.

- Feedback on Onboarding and Integration Programme (OIP)

# Good Practices for Employers



- For some FDWs, RICE IS LIFE!
  - How to resolve? – Find out more about your FDW's dietary habits
  - At same time, slowly ease her into family's eating habits

# Good Practices for Employers



- Exercise patience with FDW's learning curve, especially if language is a barrier!
- Trained does not = to doing things the way you want
- 'Retrained' and Give her time to learn
- Don't expect her to know everything in a short span of time

# Good Practices for Employers



- Hygiene standards – Practice the same standards for all family members for FDW to follow
- Educate the FDW on the importance of segregating raw and cooked food

# Good Practices for Employers



DAILY CHORES	WEEKLY CHORES
1 <input type="checkbox"/> Make beds	1 <input type="checkbox"/> Wash clothes, bed sheets and towels
2 <input type="checkbox"/> Wash dishes	2 <input type="checkbox"/> Vacuum or sweep all floors
3 <input type="checkbox"/> Deal with the mail	3 <input type="checkbox"/> Mop and dust hard floor surfaces
4 <input type="checkbox"/> Vacuum high-traffic areas	4 <input type="checkbox"/> Dust all surfaces
5 <input type="checkbox"/> Clean kitchen counter tops and stove top	5 <input type="checkbox"/> Thoroughly clean bathrooms
6 <input type="checkbox"/> Clean up spills, dirt and other messes	6 <input type="checkbox"/> Attend to your refrigerator and freezer.
7 <input type="checkbox"/> Put things in their place	7 <input type="checkbox"/> Wipe kitchen cabinets and appliances
8 <input type="checkbox"/> Take out the trash, compost and recycling	
9 <input type="checkbox"/> Wipe of bathroom sinks and counters	
MONTHLY CHORES	SEASONAL CHORES
1 <input type="checkbox"/> Clean furniture	1 <input type="checkbox"/> Clean out closets and dressers
2 <input type="checkbox"/> Wash mattress covers, pillow covers, duvets	2 <input type="checkbox"/> Vacuum window screens
3 <input type="checkbox"/> Clean the inside of your oven	3 <input type="checkbox"/> Wash windows inside and out
4 <input type="checkbox"/> Wipe down baseboards, moldings, doors	4 <input type="checkbox"/> Deep clean the fridge, freezer and pantry
5 <input type="checkbox"/> Wash ceiling light fixtures, wipe fan blades	5 <input type="checkbox"/> Rent a carpet cleaner and clean your rugs
6 <input type="checkbox"/> Clean inside the dishwasher	6 <input type="checkbox"/> Clean under furniture
7 <input type="checkbox"/> Dust, vacuum or wash window coverings	7 <input type="checkbox"/> Vacuum and clean out vents
8 <input type="checkbox"/> Wipe light switches and door handles	8 <input type="checkbox"/> Wash all pillows
	9 <input type="checkbox"/> Clean wood furniture

- Curate a checklist which is reasonable and agreeable by the FDW for household chores

# Good Practices for Employers



- Talk to your FDW
- Lend a sympathetic ear
- Build relationship over time
- Check her financial status

# Good Practices for Employers



- Ensure adequate rest
- Off days at least once a month or more

# Good Practices for Employers



- Encourage her to upgrade herself
- Participate in healthy recreational activities on her off day
- Join FAST as a member 😊



Thank  
You